

# Southwest Civilian Personnel Operations Center

Fort Riley, Kansas

SWCPOC

# Trailblazer

Issue 4-01

Together Everyone Achieves More

Oct 2001

## Director's Corner



### To Everything There is a Season

On 11 September 2001 (911 day) the United States experienced terror. Some Americans witnessed first hand those planes crashing into the World Trade Center Towers, while most of us watched the horror at home on our televisions.

On this day, our lives took an unexpected turn. As Americans, this national tragedy made us look into our hearts and values. We shared the sorrow of those whose lives were cut short at the Pentagon, Pennsylvania, and New York. We shared gratitude for the real heroes in our world - our firemen, policemen, emergency medical personnel, and local citizens.

Life has changed and taken another turn. But we know that there is a time and purpose for all things. We do not always understand what life gives us, but we remain grateful that everyone has come together to be more caring and respectful and more thankful for everything and everyone.

Some policies, regulations and procedures have been changed as a result of the September 11<sup>th</sup> incidents. Also, we were asked to plan for contingency coverage, and managers quickly identified civilian employees who are also reservists and National Guard personnel who could be recalled to active duty.

We've all seen a lot in the last few weeks, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to serve the Army to our fullest capacity. I am sure we will see many more turns in our personnel management responsibilities in the months to come, but, together, we can succeed and conquer all obstacles.



### Post-Disaster Guidance and Information for HR Personnel

This site has been established to provide human resource guidance and information on Civilian Personnel issues resulting from terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This site will remain accessible for as long as this information is needed.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.cpol.army.mil/library/911info/index.html>.

Daniel M. Clawson



### CPOCMA Director Retires

On 2 Aug 2001, a ceremony was held to bid farewell to Mr. Elmer "Smiley" Williams. Mr. Williams retired after 47 years of federal service – his last position as Director of the Civilian Personnel Operations Center Management Agency (CPOCMA).



Our SWCPOC Director and his wife were able to attend Mr. Williams' farewell dinner and were able to personally present retirement gifts from the SWCPOC.

Mr. Williams received numerous awards throughout his distinguished career, including the William H. Kushnick Award, four Meritorious Civilian Service Awards, the Superior Civilian Service Award, and the Commander's Award for Civilian Service.

Ms. Carol Prater is the Acting CPOCMA Director until a selection is made to fill the CPOCMA Director position.



### Welcome New Activities!

The Southwest/Central CPOC/CPAC Planning Session was held on 14-15 Aug 2001 for our new COE activities and the COE Southwest Division.

We started providing service to the Buffalo and Detroit Districts in July and to the Huntington, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, and Rock Island in September.



Other COE Districts and activities within the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division and Mississippi Valley Division attending the Planning Session were the Engineering Research and Development Center, Memphis, Louisville, Nashville, Vicksburg, St. Louis, and New Orleans. We will start providing service to the latter Districts and Division Headquarters in March 2002.



### CPOC/CPAC Planning Conference 13-15 November

The SWCPOC will be hosting a CPOC/CPAC Planning Conference from 13 to 15 Nov 2001 at Fort Riley, KS.

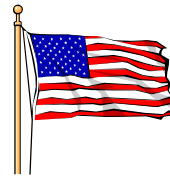
The planning conference will be for all activities serviced by the Southwest Region, to include those activities that will be migrating to the West and NorthCentral CPOC in FY 02, and those we will be servicing in the coming months.



An informal social gathering will be held on Tuesday, 13 Nov at Riley's Conference Center.



### Army's Civilian Attitude Survey



For the first time, the Army is surveying the entire civilian workforce on an Internet website. The survey is now open to all appropriated and nonappropriated fund Army civilian employees and supervisors.

The Secretary of the Army has endorsed this new survey method which will enable a direct application of results to the installation level of detail.

To take the survey now, click on <http://cpol.army.mil/survey/dasurvey>. All survey responses are said to be confidential and handled through a secure Army website.

### ABC-C News

### New Point Of Entry (POE) Module to Create Personal ABC-C Account



The Army Benefit Center –Civilian (ABC-C) web based Employee Benefits Information system (EBIS) now has a new Point of Entry (POE) module in place to make it easier for employees to create their POE account.

If you are a new user, you will need to create a POE account. Please follow the guidance in creating your password. Examples are provided on the POE "Create Password" screen in the POE module. Additionally, ensure the correct information (service computation date, civilian pay plan, grade, step, etc.) is entered to identify you as a user of this application. Users may find additional information on the ABC-C home page under the "Announcement" section at [www.ABC.army.mil](http://www.ABC.army.mil).



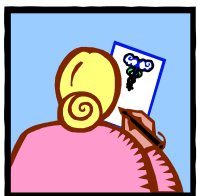
Modification of the POE application will allow existing EBIS users to enter their Social Security Number (SSN) to access the EBIS, eliminating the need to create a separate user ID. If you forget your password, you can change the password on-line without having to call ABC-C or the Help desk. Also, you can choose to be notified of successful or unsuccessful attempts of a change to a password.

There is an eight-day waiting period between password changes. Also, if your password expires, you will receive a warning notice and you must reestablish your password. Remember that the same password cannot be used within a 6-month period. If your password is due to expire soon, you will also receive a warning notice that your password must be changed every 90 days.



### FEHB OPEN SEASON DATES ANNOUNCED

The 2001 FEHB open season dates for electing or changing plans or plan options will be from 12 Nov through 10 Dec 2001.



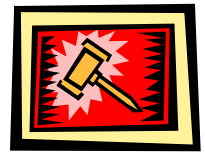
The Office of Personnel Management will most likely announce the 2002 premium rates in the upcoming weeks. If the trend continues, the overall increases could be substantial.

The open season FEHB elections will still be effective on the first full pay period in January 2002 as it has in the past (January 13, 2002).



## COURT ORDERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FEDERAL BENEFITS

When a court divides your employee benefits in a divorce or similar action, the order must be clear and unambiguous in its terms. The Merit Systems Protection Board has held that neither it, nor OPM may award survivor benefits based on uncertain or ambiguous orders.



Court orders that relate to the TSP, called "Retirement Benefit Court Orders," must be submitted to the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board.



Court orders that relate to the CSRS/FERS must be submitted to the Office of Personnel Management.

Upon receipt, the TSP board, OPM or the plan administrator will notify you and the other parties involved if the orders are acceptable, and what effect the orders will have.

If you are a party to a divorce, legal separation or annulment, your retirement plan is an important marital asset. A court order may divide a TSP account, divide a CSRS or FERS annuity or refund; provide a survivor annuity; permit a former spouse to continue coverage under the FEHB program; or require assignment of FEGLI coverage.



### FERS ANNUITY CHANGE PROPOSED FOR NURSES

Registered nurses covered under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) may eventually have their unused sick leave used in the computation of their annuities if a new bill introduced by Senator Max Cleland (D-GA) is passed.



Under FERS law, unused sick leave is NOT currently creditable in the computation of a retirement annuity, unlike the Civil Service

Retirement System (CSRS), which does allow it to be credited. The bill is entitled the "Federal Registered Nurse Retirement Adjustment Act of 2001" and has been referred to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

We will keep you informed as this bill goes through the process.

## Staffing and Classification News From the Customer-Focused Divisions

### RULE of THREE



Applicants from the general public interested in permanent Federal employment who do not have any form of federal civil service appointment status, may apply for federal civil service jobs via public notice vacancy announcements.

The public notice vacancy announcements are published by the Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) of the SWCPOC and are identified by the announcement number (which will always begin with "14DF") and a statement on the announcement that reads "This is a Delegated Competitive Examining announcement open to all U. S. Citizens."

Individuals compete based upon their experience, training and education and are referred to the selecting official via Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or DEU Certificates of Eligibles. Applicants are evaluated using OPM qualification standards for the specific position being filled, and are assigned a numerical rating based upon their overall qualifications for the position.

Candidates referred via DEU certificates are ranked in score order. Those applicants eligible for Veteran's Preference receive an additional 5 to 10 points depending upon the nature of their preference. Normally, the top three candidates are referred, with additional candidates added if more than one vacancy is being filled.



For selection, the "rule of three" applies. This means that when selecting from a certificate of eligibles, a selection must be made from the highest 3 available candidates. For a second position, the selection must be made from the highest 3 remaining candidates.

More specifically, the top 3 available candidates on the register must be in consideration in all situations at all times (in descending order), keeping in mind that a candidate with veteran's preference cannot be bypassed to select a non-preference eligible. Generally speaking, a candidate below the top three scoring applicants may not be selected for the position unless a higher scoring applicant declines or is appointed to the position.



Additional information concerning public notice announcements, "rule of three" and Veteran Preference is available through the Personnel Management and Information Support System (PERMISS) and the OPM web links below:

<http://cpol.army.mil/permis/6334.html>

<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.htm>

## TRAINING NEWS

### On-site Intern Leadership Development Course (ILDC)

We are proud to announce that the SWCPOC was the host for the Intern Leadership Development Course (ILDC) which was held from 27-30 Aug 2001 at Ft. Riley, Kansas.

The course is designed to develop interns in Army leadership doctrine and competencies needed to function effectively as a team member. Participants in this course came from within the United States, Alaska and Germany.





## Equal Employment Opportunity Interns (CP-28) rotate through SWCPOC

Three CP-28 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) interns are participating in a temporary training assignment to the SWCPOC. They will be on-site for a 6-week rotation, including formal and on-the-job training in all functional areas of personnel.

The EEO interns are: Recardo Alexander  
Ft. Leonard Wood, MO



Josui Watson  
Omaha, NE

Marilyn Whitley  
Ft. Sill, OK



## Changing with the Times

*By Perry Blake*

Change and transition are an inevitable part of the work world. The SWCPOC is obviously not immune to this truism. In the last year, we have transitioned into Customer Focus Divisions and Branches, deployed the Modern System and made an upward readjustment to our goal for fill times and number of jobs filled. We have met each challenge with flying colors.



It is natural and expected for people to complain about changes to their daily routine. It is also expected that they will adjust and move on. We have not only moved on, but we have excelled.

Some of the major reasons that the SWCPOC has done so well in the face of these changes are the quality of the employees, their dedication, professionalism and the massive amount of training that is consistently conducted. We have one of the best, if not the best-trained CPOC staffs in the Army.

This article is not meant to extol the virtues of the HRDD staff, but to applaud the dedication of the employees of the Southwest CPOC.



"No one can be educated against their wishes." Our employees have embraced this principle and used it to their best advantage and to the best advantage of the mission of this organization. The triumph of this organization is a result of the employees' effort to learn, grow and achieve. Congratulations on the success we all enjoy because of the effort you employ.

## Intern Input PRODUCTION, PRODUCTION, PRODUCTION

*By Sue Duff, DA Intern*

At CPOCMA I attended a briefing on production management. Finally someone "turned on the light" for this dreaded word in Civilian Personnel Operations Centers. I never fully understood the big picture for these goals and measurements until now.

Each year Congress takes a look at the spaces and money for manpower. Any agency that is under executing manpower, loses those spaces and the associated money.

If an Operations Center fails to keep Army positions filled at full capacity, those spaces result in a reduction of Army mission capabilities. Hence the domino effect of a reduction in military personnel and eventually a Reduction-in-Force for civilian spaces to bring them in line with reduced military allocations.

Since the reason behind the "production standards" has been explained, I understand how my contributions fit into the "big picture". Our Operations Center efforts help everyone stay employed by the Army.

So hop aboard this PRODUCTION TRAIN, and be a part of this great country's mission. Put some faces with those spaces!

## Training Excellence at Southwest CPOC's HRDD

*By Derrick J. St. Julien, DA Intern*

The Human Resource Development Division (HRDD) is currently the first stop for DA Interns who will be trained in the Southwest Region. DA interns are first greeted by HRDD's warm and friendly staff and then are treated to a customary welcoming breakfast. DA Interns are treated with professional courtesy from the beginning and are encouraged to develop their unique leadership style.

The HRDD Chief is credited with irrigating this division's esprit de corps. Each e-mail that the Chief sends has in it as a reminder of the two values which elevate HRDD to training excellence. These values are:

- 1) Quality Trainers: Ready to Serve

and

## 2) TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More.

Although everyone at HRDD is instrumental in the training that DA interns receive, the Intern Coordinator is especially preoccupied with every detail of the DA intern's professional development and holds herself personally accountable for their success. Each member of the HRDD staff shares the positive attributes of the Intern Coordinator, and their success is truly the result of the highest quality trainers who work together as a team.

### These New Shoes

*by Julianne Hyma, DA Intern*

To be an intern is to walk ever so softly in brand new shoes, each step a process leading to a more comfortable fit. It is a never-ending process, this breaking in of new shoes and as the intern moves forward through his or her two-year internship, the feeling of newness remains the same...every single step of the way. For at the very moment that the intern's shoes begin to show wear, they are magically, no, make that methodically replaced by another brand new pair.

And so it goes for the duration of the internship, each rotation a step in the process of becoming more comfortable in the mold for which he or she has been designed.

The day at long last arrives when the last shoe is donned and the intern's closet is full of well-worn and seemingly comfortable shoes. With graduation day just around the corner, the years of hard work and dedication drawing to a close, the intern discovers that there really is no such thing as "the end." Only another new beginning disguised (and perhaps another pair of new shoes to keep the intern on his or her toes!).

## *LMER News*

### DoD Guidance on Labor Relations Implications

(Excerpt re-printed from guidance issued by Mr. David Helmer, DA)



On September 14, 2001, President Bush issued Proclamation 7463, Declaration of National Emergency by Reason of Certain Terrorists Attacks. This proclamation states that "a national emergency exists by reason of the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, New York, New York, and the Pentagon, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on the United States." The President declared that the national emergency has existed since

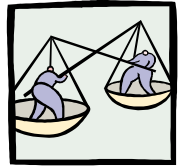
September 11, 2001, and has exercised authorities under various statutes.

Questions have been raised concerning what impact Proclamation 7463 has on our statutory obligations under 5 USC Chapter 71, the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (Statute). This guidance is intended to address the most commonly encountered questions on this matter.

## Questions & Answers

### 1. Does Proclamation 7463 override the requirements of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute?

**No.** Proclamation 7463 **does not** override your statutory obligations under the Statute. While the Proclamation is intended to provide the President certain flexibilities and authorities, it does not relieve you of any obligations you have under the Statute. The Statute continues to apply to the Department of Defense during this national emergency.



### 2. Since there is a national emergency and management has the right under 5 USC 7106(a)(2)(D) to take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the agency mission during emergencies, what are our obligations concerning changes to conditions of employment?



As a general rule, the Authority has held that prior to implementing a change in conditions of employment of bargaining unit employees, an agency is required to provide the exclusive representative with notice and an opportunity to bargain over those aspects of the change that are within the duty to bargain. See 55 FLRA 848, 852.

In the case of emergencies under 5 USC 7106(a)(2)(D), the Authority has recognized that there may be instances where the agency may implement a change due to an emergency situation and bargain with the union on a post-implementation basis. See 29 FLRA 307, 325. With this in mind, there may be an emergency that requires an immediate response from the agency and the response will affect conditions of

employment of bargaining unit members. In this case, you would advise the union of the immediate changes being made and offer to conduct post-implementation bargaining with the union over these changes to the extent that conditions of employment are affected. Any agreement you reach with your union under these circumstances should be applied retroactively, if practical.



**3. In order to meet our mission requirements during this national emergency, we believe it may be necessary to terminate flexible and compressed work schedules. On what basis may we terminate such schedules for bargaining unit employees?**

The Federal Employees Flexible and Compressed Work Schedules Act of 1982 (Work Schedules Act) intends the establishment and termination of alternative work schedules to be fully negotiable, subject only to the provisions of the Work Schedules Act itself. See 52 FLRA 1265, 1293. Thus, management cannot assert a management right under the Statute as a basis for terminating an alternative work schedule.



The criteria for terminating an alternative work schedule are found at 5 USC 6131. If you have an agreement with your union concerning alternative work schedules and wish to terminate the schedule, 5 USC 6131(c)(3)(A) requires you to reopen the agreement with your union to seek termination of the schedule involved. However, you should check your existing collective bargaining agreement to see whether it already gives management sufficient leeway to make adjustments required to accomplish the mission. If not, then you are required to negotiate with the union. If you reach impasse in bargaining with respect to terminating such schedules, the impasse shall be presented to the Federal Service Impasses Panel for resolution.

Under 5 USC 6131(c)(3), the Panel is required to take final action in favor of the agency determination if there is evidence that an alternative work schedule has caused adverse agency impact.

**4. We understand the requirements for terminating an alternative work schedule, but what if we are unable to complete this bargaining before it is necessary to terminate the alternative work schedule?**

In these instances, you must establish that the delay caused by lengthy negotiations is impeding the agency's ability to effectively and efficiently carry out its mission. As a result, you would be terminating the alternative work schedules for the necessary functioning of the agency before bargaining is completed. Although bargaining is not completed before you terminate the schedule, you should continue negotiations. Any agreement you reach with your union under these circumstances should be applied retroactively, if practical.



**5. If we anticipate that we may need to make changes in working conditions due to an overriding exigency or for the necessary functioning of the agency, is it recommended that we inform our union that we may be unable to complete bargaining on certain future changes in working conditions arising from this emergency or handle this on a case-by-case basis?**

It depends. While informing the union of this possibility in advance keeps the lines of communication open with your union, you also do not want to give the impression that you do not expect to meet bargaining obligations in all cases. We recommend that you make a determination on a case-by-case basis whether to make such changes due to overriding exigencies or for the necessary functioning of the agency. We recommend that you always contact your union to make them aware of any changes you intend to make before you make such changes. You should advise them of the change to be made, how it is connected to operations resulting from the national emergency, when you will conduct post-implementation bargaining, and that any agreement you reach will be applied retroactively, if practical.



Your feedback is important to us.  
Send comments or suggestions to:  
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